

NATO MINISTERS MEETING

U.S. Supported in Missile Pact Effort

By ORR KELLY
Star Staff Writer

The U.S. effort to get an agreement with the Soviet Union to control the deployment of antiballistic missiles received strong support from the defense ministers of six other North Atlantic Treaty Organization nations in a two-day meeting that ended here yesterday.

The expression of support came, according to sources close to the conference, even though Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara told them the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff disagree with him and think that this country should set up an ABM system.

Talks are now under way in

the Soviet Union in which U.S. officials are trying to convince the Russians that deployment of ABMs will simply mean an expensive escalation of the arms race and that it cannot affect the balance of power.

Agreement on the present U.S. approach to the problem came after a 3½-hour discussion. Although no vote was taken, it was learned, the other defense ministers generally encouraged the U.S. to continue its efforts.

Those involved in the conference of the NATO Nuclear Planning Group — the defense ministers of Canada, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey, Britain and the United States — ended their meeting with the feeling that they would all have been better off if they had had such a face-to-face encounter years ago.

Beset for Years

The NATO alliance has been beset for years by disagreement between those who have the big bomb and those who haven't, and the meeting of the last two days seems to have gotten them moving toward some workable solutions.

It was learned, for example, that the subject of the multilateral force, in which crews of mixed nationalities would have manned NATO ships — one of the controversial proposals for settling the differences between the nuclear and non-nuclear powers — didn't even come up at the meeting.

The ministers did agree that the 7,000 tactical nuclear weapons available for the defense of Europe are adequate, but they agreed that they should make a careful study of the proper "mix" of weapons.

This question was apparently raised by the desire of Turkey to have a series of nuclear mines installed to protect its northern borders.

Agreement was reached, it was understood, to study not only the need for mines along the Turkish border but also at other locations in the NATO area and to study the whole question of the tactical use of nuclear weapons.

The ministers are all apparently concerned about ways that tactical weapons — as opposed to intercontinental ballistic mis-

siles—could be used effectively while keeping a conflict from blowing up into a fullscale nuclear exchange.

Change in Ratio

During the discussions, it was learned, the ministers were told that the U.S. superiority over the Soviet Union in strategic nuclear weapons—whether they would be delivered by missile or plane—is on the order of 5- or 6-to-1.

This was apparently the first time such a ratio had been used. Normally, the comparison is between missile forces, and that ratio is about 3- or 4-to-1.

Actually, such comparisons are virtually meaningless since the value of a strategic missile force can only be measured

realistically in relation to the targets to be covered and not in relationship to the missiles available to a potential enemy—except in the sense that every missile set in place becomes one more target that should be covered.

McNamara is to confer privately today with Defense Minister Gerhard Schroeder of West Germany. Their talks are expected to center around financing of U.S. troops stationed in Germany.

Schroeder is believed to be pushing for U.S. acceptance of a proposal that would prohibit launching of an American nuclear weapons from a NATO base without permission of the host nation.